

1. (currently amended) A method operative in a work environment wherein entities to be scheduled each access a computer network using a client computer, comprising:

during a given time period, each of a set of entities, irrespective of their seniority or ranking in the work environment, using an associated client computer to identify, from a plurality of schedule pattern sets that are predetermined for the entity, a given schedule pattern set and to identify a set of one or more bids with respect to one or more schedules that are associated with that given schedule pattern set, the scheduled pattern sets being predetermined based on an attribute associated with the entity, wherein at least first and second entities having access to the schedule pattern sets view and bid on different schedule pattern sets;

at the close of the given time period, using one or more processing devices to select a given set of the entities for scheduling with respect to the given schedule pattern set; and

using one or more processing devices to assign the given set of the entities to one or more candidate schedules that are associated with the given schedule pattern set.

2. (previously presented) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of:

identifying a set of sorting preferences associated with the given schedule pattern set.

3. (previously presented) The method as described in claim 2 further including the step of identifying a new given schedule pattern set and an associated set of sorting preferences during the given time period.

4. (previously presented) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of selecting a different schedule pattern set, and identifying a set of one or more bids associated with the different schedule pattern set during the given time period.

5. (original) The method as described in claim 1 wherein the entity ranks the set of one or more bids associated with the given schedule pattern set.

6. (original) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of automatically ranking the set of one or more bids associated with the given schedule pattern set.

7. (original) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of assigning a schedule to at least one entity that did not provide a bid for any candidate schedules that are associated with the given schedule pattern set.

8. (original) The method as described in claim 1 further including the step of deselecting a given set of the entities for scheduling with respect to the given schedule pattern set.

9. (cancelled)

10. (previously presented) The method as described in claim 1 wherein a supervisor entity ~~configures the given schedule pattern set such that a first entity can view and bid on at least one schedule in the given schedule pattern set for which a second entity cannot view or bid~~ determines the plurality of schedule pattern sets that are predetermined for the entity.

11. (previously presented) The method as described in claim 1 wherein the first entity has a given status in the work environment that the second entity does not share.

12. (new) The method as described in claim 1 wherein the attribute is an employment status.

13. (new) The method as described in claim 1 wherein the attribute is a skill associated with the entity.

14. (new) The method as described in claim 1 wherein the attribute is a seniority level.